

Application Serial No. 09/877,164
Amendment dated February 3, 2004
Reply to Office Action of September 29, 2003

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

1. (Currently Amended) A reagent reservoir adapted for containing a liquid reagent for extraction by a multiple head pipettor, the reservoir comprising:

a plurality of reservoir side walls and a patterned bottom wall collectively defining an a reservoir interior for containing the liquid reagent; and

a plurality of recesses in the patterned bottom wall collectively surrounded by the reservoir side walls, the volume of the reservoir interior being substantially greater than the collective volume of the recesses, each recess opening facing upwardly to receive one of the heads of the pipettor, and each recess including a top edge, a bottom, and a plurality of side wall portions, said side wall portions collectively surrounding said bottom, and each of said side wall portions angling outwardly from the bottom to the top edge thereby promoting flow of the liquid reagent to the respective recess bottoms to allow full extraction of the liquid reagent by the multiple head pipettor,

wherein the height of the reservoir side walls is at least several times the depth of the recesses in the patterned bottom wall so that liquid reagent can fill the reservoir to a level above the top edges of the recesses.

2. (Original) The reservoir of claim 1 comprising 96 recesses adapted to correspond to a 96 well pipettor head format.

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3. (Original) The reservoir of claim 1 comprising 384 recesses adapted to correspond to a 384 well pipettor head format.
4. (Original) The reservoir of claim 1 comprising 1536 recesses adapted to correspond to a 1536 well pipettor head format.
5. (Original) The reservoir of claim 1, wherein the side wall portions include four connected substantially triangular surfaces angling outwardly from the bottom.
6. (Original) The reservoir of claim 1, wherein the top edges between adjacent recesses meet at an angle to form a pointed peak to thereby prevent liquid reagent from settling between recesses.
7. (Original) The reservoir of claim 1, wherein the recess bottoms are circular.
8. (Original) The reservoir of claim 1, wherein the top edges are rounded.
9. (Currently Amended) A reagent reservoir adapted for containing a liquid reagent for extraction by a multiple head pipettor, the reservoir comprising:

a plurality of reservoir side walls and a patterned bottom wall collectively defining an a reservoir interior for containing the liquid reagent; and

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a plurality of recesses in the patterned bottom wall collectively surrounded by the reservoir side walls, the volume of the reservoir interior being substantially greater than the collective volume of the recesses, each recess opening facing upwardly to receive one of the heads of the pipettor, and each recess including a top edge, a bottom, and four connected substantially triangular surfaces angling outwardly from the bottom to the top edge, wherein the top edges between adjacent recesses meet at an angle to form a pointed peak thereby promoting flow of the liquid reagent to the respective recess bottoms to allow full extraction of the liquid reagent by the multiple head pipettor,

wherein the height of the reservoir side walls is at least several times the depth of the recesses in the patterned bottom wall so that liquid reagent can fill the reservoir to a level above the top edges of the recesses.

10. (Original) The reservoir of claim 9 comprising 96 recesses adapted to correspond to a 96 well pipettor head format.

11. (Original) The reservoir of claim 9 comprising 384 recesses adapted to correspond to a 384 well pipettor head format.

12. (Original) The reservoir of claim 9 comprising 1536 recesses adapted to correspond to a 1536 well pipettor head format.

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13. (Original) The reservoir of claim 9, wherein the recess bottoms are circular.

14. (Currently Amended) A method of extracting a liquid reagent from a reagent reservoir by a multiple head pipettor, the reservoir including a plurality of reservoir side walls and a patterned bottom wall collectively defining ~~an a~~ reservoir interior, and a plurality of recesses in the patterned bottom wall, each recess opening facing upwardly to receive one of the heads of the pipettor, and each recess including a top edge, a bottom, and a plurality of side wall portions, said side wall portions collectively surrounding said bottom, and each of said side wall portions angling outwardly from the bottom to the top edge, the volume of the reservoir interior being substantially greater than the collective volume of the recesses and the height of the reservoir side walls being at least several times the depth of the recesses in the patterned bottom wall so that liquid reagent can fill the reservoir to a level above the top edge of the recesses, the method comprising the steps of:

filling the interior of the reagent reservoir with the liquid reagent to a desired volume, ~~whereby the flow of the liquid reagent is toward the recess bottoms~~ which is at a level substantially above the top edges of the recesses;

positioning the multiple head pipettor in the reservoir interior to align each pipettor head with a respective recess bottom; and

repeatedly extracting a sample volume of the liquid reagent from the reservoir interior by using the multiple head pipettor until the liquid reagent is at least substantially completely removed from the reagent reservoir, said liquid reagent being accumulated at the

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bottoms of the respective recesses as the level of the liquid reagent falls below the top edge of the recesses, thereby facilitating further extraction by the pipettor heads aligned with the recess bottoms.

15-20. (Canceled)

21. (New) The reservoir of claim 1 further comprising at least one baffle extending upward from the patterned bottom wall to reduce splashing of liquid reagent in the reservoir.

22. (New) The reservoir of claim 9 further comprising at least one baffle extending upward from the patterned bottom wall to reduce splashing of liquid reagent in the reservoir.